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Are Ye Able?

BY ALFRED GRANT WALTON

For the day of their wrath is come and who is able to stand? Revelation 6:17.

THE Book of the Revelation is one of the most difficult to understand in the entire compendium of our sacred scriptures. It is teeming with strange beasts, fantastic imagery and cryptic symbolism, all of which are baffling even to biblical scholars, and therefore it cannot be regarded as kindergarten material for laymen. For example, here is portrayed the vision of a beast with seven heads and ten horns and ten diadems on his horns with a body like a leopard, feet like a bear and a mouth like a lion. Then there is that other beast that had two horns like a lamb, which spoke like a dragon and branded the people on their right hands and on their foreheads. The number of this beast was six hundred and sixty-six. What can we do with such grotesque figures? Because of the peculiar nature of the book it has been given very unusual interpretations. Out in Michigan there is a sect known as the House of David—you have seen their bewhiskered baseball team—who believe that there are going to be 144,000 persons who shall never taste of death. These people are known as crystal water men and no red blood will be in their veins; hence the designation. These crystal water men are to live forever. The members of the House of David get this bizarre idea from this very book. There are other people even in these enlightened times who think that this book prophesies present-day events and they have identified the beast with various contemporary world figures.

What do we really know about the Book of the Revelation? Well, we know that it was written about 90 A.D. in the times of the cruel and hated Domitian whom the early Christians considered the reincarnation of Nero. It follows a very definite literary style well known in those early days and is called an apocalypse. Apocalyptic books appeared between 250 B.C. and 100 A.D. and a number of them like the Book of

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Enoch, the Assumption of Moses and the Syballine Oracles are well known to scholars. This particular book follows the general style of such literature with the use of visions, symbolic events and secret symbols known only to the elect. It was written to give encouragement to the early Christians as they met the cruel tyrannies of their Roman oppressor and to call them to be faithful even unto death. As Mrs. Lyman has aptly described it, it was a "book for hard times." Needless to say, the Book of the Revelation has absolutely no relation to our contemporary civilization and any attempt to make it do so reveals a patent ignorance of biblical scholarship. The scene that is brought before us by this text is the final consummation of all things, with God and the Lamb in full control of the situation, prepared to strike down all adversaries and to assert their eternal authority. "The great day of their wrath is come and who is able to stand?"

PROGRESS IN SCIENCE

We do not consider that this present period of history is a time when the wrath of God is directed against men any more than any other era in the unfolding processes of history, but even the most casual observer will admit that world conditions are exceedingly hectic, and that our times are hard indeed and we may properly raise the question whether we are able to stand under the present strains of our modern civilization. We have a world that is opposed to war and yet is spending more than ever before for armaments. Two futile and destructive wars are actually going on now. Nationalism is asserting itself in a vigorous and ominous manner and democratic government is seriously threatened. In addition to everything else there is economic maladjustment with all the attendant evils of poverty, unemployment and universal human suffering. Is it any wonder that the hearts of men are filled with uncertainty, fear and bewildering despair? The question is: Are we able to stand in such momentous times?

In the field of science and technological skill man has shown unusual capacity to deal with the world of nature and of things. Every day writes a thrilling and dramatic chapter of scientific discovery and achievement. As far back as 1844 the Commissioner of Patents at Washington was so bewildered by the number of new inventions that he prophesied the time would come when the period of human improvement must end; yet despite his forecast thousands of new patents are issued annually and humanity continues to reap the benefits of the scientific studies made by our creative minds. One of the most amazing areas of human progress has been in the field of pathology. Great plagues that formerly swept the earth with devastating fury have been brought under subjection. The last hundred years have seen the development of vaccines, sera and antitoxin, the discovery of anodynes and of anesthetics and innumerable new methods for the treatment of the ailments of men. Recently we have had the discovery of insulin, the greatest single step forward in a generation. Right now amazing strides are being made in endocrinology and while we have not conquered all the foes of health—notably cancer—we have gone far beyond the fondest conjectures of the most sweeping imagination. Yes! When we think simply in terms of our natural world we must acknowledge that man is coping with it reasonably well. Truly, in science at least, man has been able to stand.

NEW IDEAS IN EDUCATION

When we turn to the field of education we are likewise impressed with man's capacities and powers to meet the changing world. One of the most hopeful signs in the educational world is the present freedom from rigidity and slavish tradition, and the disposition to meet new social and economic situations in the spirit of openmindedness and adventure. Modern education is determined to keep a proper balance between the values of the past and the particular requirements of the present. Thus we find a man like President Conant of Harvard University telling us that the only escape from the complexities of the twentieth century is to be found "in communion with the sages of the past, in the sharing of the accumulated wealth of humanity and using the phraseology of the great writers of the past as guidance in the present problems." Likewise the gifted young president of the University of Chicago, Robert Maynard Hutchins, in his startling book *The Higher Learning in America,* proposes a complete new structure for higher education, with a junior college covering the last two years of high school and the first two years in college and the university commencing with the present junior year. Only those working on fundamental metaphysical problems would remain on the faculty of the university, the present departmental system would go and professional schools as part of the university would not exist. The sum purpose of all this change is to make the university a place for the pursuit of truth for truth's sake without regard for economic considerations. In such suggestions we see education turning to the past for wisdom and direction and at the same time looking forward. Modern education does not disregard the past, but is ever coming to grips with present realities and the problems which confront the world today.

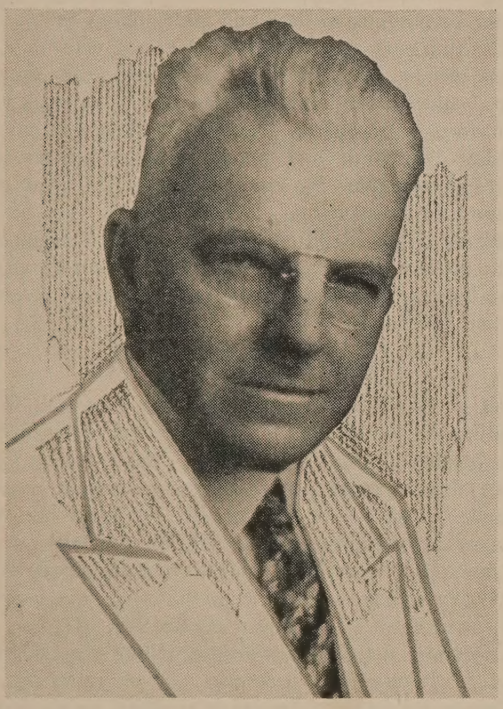
IN A WORLD OF DECLINING MORALS

But there is a field where it is not possible to be so hopeful or assuring as in the fields of science or the broad programs and processes of education, and that is in the realm of the moral life. The question is whether man has adequate moral and spiritual resources equal to this modern world.

Let us consider a very simple illustration. An infant lying in a cradle might find himself out of sorts with the world and decide to make a fuss about it. But what can he do? Well, he can cry, very lustily, and create quite a bit of disturbance for the family and for the neighbors in the adjacent apartment. Of course, he will be more effective if he works at night, and he usually does! He can swing his arms, kick his feet and smash his rattle on the crib and be quite annoying, but having done these things he has about exhausted the limits of his capacities. Why? Because his strength is very limited. But let that child grow to be a man and

let him decide to go on a spree and he can do a tremendous amount of harm. He can hit another man with his fist and knock him down. He can drive his car at eighty miles an hour and kill an innocent pedestrian by his recklessness. He can write a vituperous letter and cause a scandal. He can break up a lodge, put a political meeting in a turmoil, and destroy the effectiveness of a church. And how does this happen? This individual has increased in strength of body, of mind and of influence. Surely it is apparent that with increasing power there is increasing demand for self-control.

It has been worked out that in the days of the Ptolemies in Egypt man had a capacity of between



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1,500 and 4,000 kilogram calorie units per day and the civilization of that time was conditioned by such limitation. But today we have power equal to between 150,000 and 160,000 kilogram calorie units per person per day. All of this means that man has greatly multiplied his strength and his ability to do things and while such increase may work for human betterment and be of real benefit to the race, if there is not the proper control to go with it, it may represent great potential danger.

THE COST OF CRIME

Moral standards are tremendously important factors in self-control. Civilization can hardly get along without them, for if they are taken from us our vaunted achievements may become a frankenstein of human destruction. Frankly, I am concerned as I look at the world to find that moral development has lagged far behind scientific and technological development so that there is a real danger in present conditions, a danger that must not be ignored.

Take this business of crime; it is one of the most serious problems confronting the American people. J. Edgar Hoover tells us that crime is costing the United States approximately fifteen billion dollars per year, a sum of money which is four times the amount spent on our whole program of public school education and equivalent to about $120 for every man, woman and child within the confines of the nation. Now crime is essentially a problem of youth and has many explanations. Its causes may be found in inadequate environment, lack of proper recreational facilities, broken home life, poverty and the like. The point to be considered here is that the criminal is essentially an anti-social individual. He has no regard for property rights or human rights, he has no respect for law which is the foundation for organized government, he is lacking in a code of proper moral standards by which the best interests of organized society are achieved. He is even more dangerous in these modern times because of this added power. He does not rely simply on a revolver; he uses an automatic or a sub-machine gun. He makes his escape not on a hand car or a freight car but in a high powered automobile. When he works in gangs he uses private telephone wires and even the radio for his purposes. The ramification of rackets in the United States beggars description. We have in the United States an ever increasing body of known criminals who are a constant menace to law and order and they are so because they are lacking in the definite moral qualities which normal society demands.

THE PASSION FOR GAMBLING

But let us get down to the rank and file of ordinary citizens, who live in our best homes, belong to our best clubs and are counted as respectable church members. Even in such a group we find a very marked indifference to certain common standards of right and wrong. Take such a simple matter as gambling. The gambling craze holds every stratum of society in its grip. In New York we have many rackets. Butchers, laundrymen, restaurant owners, furriers, almost every class of business has to deal with them. One of the rackets is the policy slip racket whereby one buys a policy ticket for any sum he desires to invest and hopes that he will draw the lucky number and be handsomely rewarded. The business runs into millions of dollars annually and almost everyone gets in on it. When the Irish sweepstakes are held we have pictures in our newspaper of some lucky iceman or some burly plumber who has just won $50,000 and is now going to retire as a rich man. Of course, no newspaper publishes the pictures of those who lose out and who furnished the prize money and the profits. This mania to get something for nothing has found its way even into our churches and many of them are going in for bingo parties which are looked upon as sure profit enterprises.

One might elaborate on this matter further and speak of those who fool with the stock market for the same purpose, and whose hectic machinations helped to precipitate the crash of 1929 and made necessary the more

rigid controls of the present securities and exchange commission. There are even those who advocate the establishment of state and national lotteries to pay off our present debts. If someone wants to throw away a few dollars of his hard earned income on gambling I am not going to lose sleep over it, but I do assert that the whole ramification of this speculative business with its attendant suffering, its false philosophy of getting something for nothing, with its crude appeal to human cupidity supports the contention that there is a certain moral lack in modern society that is as disquieting as it is dangerous.

INTERNATIONAL LAWLESSNESS

Everywhere we see a lack of social responsibility. Among employers and employees there is altogether too great a lack of common standards of decency and honor. There are businessmen who are far more interested in maintaining dividend checks and excessive surpluses than they are in preserving the human rights of the individuals who create the wealth for them. There are employees who do not give a tinker's malediction for national prosperity or government deficits so long as they get everything that they want for themselves. It is tragic that even among the unfortunate people who have found it necessary to go on public relief there may be found some who have passed beyond the stage of self-respect and personal responsibility to a feeling that the government must provide for them—and why should one bother about doing anything for himself? In our government itself congressmen think mostly in terms of their own constituencies. There are so many blocs—the soldier bloc, the agricultural bloc, the public utilities bloc, et cetera, ad infinitum, that our legislators do not have a chance to think in terms of the welfare of the national government as a whole.

We may press this point further in consideration of international issues. The world was horrified when the Kaiser was reported to have referred to an international treaty as a scrap of paper, but such attitudes do not horrify any more. We have all heard of the League of Nations Covenant, the Nine Power Treaty, and the Kellogg Peace Pact in which war was renounced as an instrument of national policy. Japan was in on every one of them. But Japan is in China today and the motion pictures are bringing us the graphic representation of a modern militarized nation moving relentlessly in its conquest against a weak, unorganized but peaceful neighbor. Are moral standards controlling here? Absolutely not!

CIVILIZATION NOT ENOUGH

Is it any wonder in the light of these circumstances that our foremost leaders of thought and our molders of public opinion are coming frankly to recognize the need for the maintenance of moral and spiritual values as the only hope of the world? Thus Dorothy Thompson tells us that civilization is not good enough, and Dr. Alexis Carrel lists moral corruption as more dangerous for civilization than yellow fever, typhus and cancer, and he pointedly inquires: "Is it not more important to improve man than the goods consumed by him? Are health and comfort of any value if we become mentally or spiritually worthless?"

"The day of wrath is come and who is able to stand?" We can give these words a modern twist and a modern application. We can stand so far as science and technological advance are concerned. We can stand so far as education is involved. For in these fields we have been able to meet new situations with new methods and techniques. But can we stand in matters of morals and religion? That is another question, and a serious one, too. Now I do not come as a weeping Jeremiah, as a lugubrious prophet of impending doom. But we should recognize conditions as they really are. The time has come when men need to see the necessity for preserving religious beliefs, spiritual convictions founded on a faith in the sovereignty of God and man's obligation to him. In our pursuits of the goals of education we should ask what we are being educated for. Education without moral and spiritual appreciations can be as sterile and as barren as the Sahara desert. Enlightenment may indeed be dangerous, for it contains within itself the seeds of self-destruction. No amount of knowledge can compensate for lost spiritual convictions. Our very life depends upon a recognition of the worth of man, upon a faith in final appeal of truth and in a firm conviction that human relations may be worked out in terms of human brotherhood.

THE CHURCH OUR ONLY HOPE

Personally, I have so much confidence in man, in his intelligence, in his divine capacities that I believe he will be able to stand even in these trying times. There is an ultimate appeal of truth that cannot be resisted. "Right is right, since God is God and right the cause must win; to doubt would be disloyalty, to falter would be sin." But we will save ourselves many, many headaches if we wake up to the moral needs, the spiritual requirements of our complex civilization.

And now for a final word regarding the Christian church. I know its weaknesses and shortcomings, its conservatism, its petty denominationalism, its antiquated theological formulations. But I know also the place it has occupied in history. With all its limitations it has stood through the centuries as the greatest uplifting and inspiring force, the greatest institution for moral ends in human society. It has championed the cause of the needy and the oppressed, inspired the daring, strengthened the bold, illumined the pathway of the seeker in his search for truth, it has comforted even to death. We need the church now as never before. And in that church we need the strength, the virility, the passionate fire of youth to carry its work forward.

God grant that the church may live, freed from its weaknesses and limitations but strong in its spiritual influence and power that men may be girded with the armor of righteousness and, having done all, be able to stand!

THE Church has denied the universality of Christianity by its divisions over doctrine, race and nationality. It has itself erected the barriers that separate Christianity from Christ.—T. Z. Koo.

What Do We Get Out of Prayer?

By John M. Versteeg

JUST what is prayer? Not words! Breath, it has been well said, may be used in words, but words are more than breath. We use words in prayer, but prayer is more than words. The distinction between prayer and prayers must always be kept clear. Nor is prayer request. Requests have their place in prayer, provided only they harmonize with the higher values. This is why Christians commonly end their prayers with "For Jesus' sake." It is their way of saying that if they cannot get his endorsement, and do not further his spirit, their prayers are to be disregarded! We must not forget that all the while we ask with our lips, our lives are giving us away. They show God what we really wish. Whatever we dominantly desire, that is actually our prayer. The demand we make on the universe, what we ask of life, that is the prayer we really offer. If then our lips ask for things our lives belie, our prayers are contradictions. Our lives then speak so loudly that God cannot hear what our lips say. But if our prayers are after the same thing our lives are after, requests are natural and inevitable.

But—and this is the fact to be stressed—prayer is more than petition. Real prayer is adjustment. It is the soul taking God seriously. It is the pilgrimage from self to God. On that journey, the soul has many a battle to wage between right and wrong. Real prayer is communion. It is the bringing of God to our attention, and the bringing of ourselves to God's attention. It is conscious concentration upon what we regard as divine. It is waiting on and for God. Real prayer is appreciation. It is calling up before the mind all that God is, and rejoicing in the glory of that! Real prayer is appropriation. It is the deliberate attempt to get God in. Who of us is equal to prayer? And yet, we are born with shrines in our hearts. We have to pray! Hartley Coleridge's advice will always be pertinent:

> Whate'er is good to ask, ask that of heaven,
> Though it be what thou canst not hope to see;
> Pray to be perfect though the material leaven
> Forbid the spirit so on earth to be;
> But if for any wish thou dar'st not pray,
> Then pray to God to cast that wish away.

I

What do we get out of prayer? This is by no means the highest possible question. But it is a legitimate one. For we are needy folk. *What we get out of prayer depends upon what we see in God.* There is a naive idea at large that one has but to pray, and, presto! the results will ensue.

Said Alexander Pope:

> For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;
> He can't be wrong whose life is in the right.

But that begs the question. When and how is a life in the right? Many a person whose life is in the wrong thinks it is in the right, and prays accordingly. It is possible so to pray that your prayers become narrower and narrower, until you are easily satisfied with prayers you ought to be heartily ashamed of. Here is a person who never prays for anything but things. It is only when he needs something that he prays. He thinks of God only as a present help in trouble. He offers up petitions and never devotions to the ever living and true God. A man who sees in God only a way to get what he wants cannot possibly grow in grace. Neither can the man who sees in God only a sort of cosmic wrecking crew, ready to respond to the alarm anytime there is a collision with disaster. Folks such as these become spiritually stunted. Because their God is small their "sky will cave in on" them "by and by."

One editor reports what a great pulpit prayer his pastor packed into one sentence: "O God, teach us to think of Thee in ways that will help us to pray." Just so! If the God you think of when you pray is just "a vague oblong blur," one who merely backs up your views and has your tastes and favors the color of your skin and is strong for your social group, you may pray with an easy conscience, but it will also be an unenlightened conscience. "They profess to know God," Paul wrote to Titus, "but their very minds and consciences are unclean."

This then is to be remembered: Many people are primitive in their praying because they are belated in their concepts of God. In a day when the greatest thinking that is being done is being done about God, many people pray in ways that hinder them. The way they pray breaks down everything fine in them. It ruins them. They lose their souls by prayer. No prayer could possibly benefit them more than the petition that God will help them to think straight, without mental reservation or secret evasion of mind, free from fear and prejudice and from childish ideas of God.

From this it follows that *our faith is to be, not in prayer, but in God.* If people could once get this simple but central fact in their minds, it would revolutionize religion for them. They would get to the core of religion, to its irreducible minimum. There was Descartes. He had that most desirable and most aggravating of minds, the philosophical. He resolved to doubt everything, down "to the pen he wrote with, the stove that warmed him, the food he ate." And what did he find? He found he could doubt his doubts, but not his doubting! "I think, therefore I am," was the conclusion he reached. All thought has had to be run in different molds because he said that. He thus became the father of modern philosophy. Kant followed in his train. He did not put it in precisely these words, but he really concluded: I ought, therefore I am. He thus became the father of modern ethics.

Centuries before either of these, some soul-hungry lads, following a perambulating teacher along the highways and byways of a tiny country hard by the Mediterranean, looked longingly into his face and said: "Teach us to pray." They knew he knew how to pray, for prayer was his vital breath; it was his native air. There had come a day in his life, after weeks of grueling quest, that he had concluded: I pray, therefore I am! All piety

has been different since then. Is it to be wondered at that he became the founder of modern religion?

Now notice what Jesus meant by "I pray." He taught his disciples, less how than what to pray. He said, in effect: Pray God! Say, our Father. The first thing to think of in prayer is not prayer, but God. Even when you talk *to* him, talk *of* him. Say, Father, *Thou* art in heaven! Thou art at the center of control! Thy name is worth revering! Thy kingdom come! Thy will be done! It is God and the concerns of God that are to be on our hearts. For prayer, first and foremost, is "a dying to self and a becoming alive unto God." Faith in prayer is faith in an act; faith in God is faith in a power. Faith in prayer is faith in a means; faith in God is faith in an end. When we pray, then, let our interest be, not in prayer, but in God; not in a form, but in a force; not in an act, but in a Friend; not in saying something, but in being with Someone.

What do we get out of prayer? Perhaps lost souls. Perhaps just a pious habit. Perhaps nothing. Nothing, because we deserve nothing. For the question is always: Have we the right to pray? Have we earned the right to? For prayer is fellowship with God. The mystics liked to say that God prays in us. By this they meant that only his inspiration makes prayer possible. Right here we encounter a colossal truth. Prayer is a matter of mutual acquaintance. We have already said that prayer depends on our knowledge of God. Let it now be said that prayer depends on God's knowledge of us. "He knoweth our downsitting and our uprising; he understandeth our thoughts afar off."

But that is only one kind of knowledge. There are many kinds, more important. There are some of you with whom, with the best of will, I cannot share my little knowledge. It isn't that I would not like to, but it is simply impossible. For nothing in you responds to this knowledge of mine. I have a smattering of knowledge of philosophy. I have stood on the fringes of its elusive continents. But philosophy leaves most of you dead. You have a more peaceable way of existence. So, though you were to plead with me to communicate my knowledge of philosophy—if you will permit my imagination to run riot!—and though I were ever so willing, it would be impossible. There is no basis of fellowship between us at this point. Every Tom, Dick and Harry, not to mention every Mary, assumes the right to discuss theology. They rush in where thinkers fear to tread. But have they the right to rush in? No; their rushing is just proof of their inability ever to approximate theology. Now, this has been a one-sided illustration! For doubtless there are many realms of knowledge you have that I have not, and where—the worse for me!—I am presumptuous and speak with all the authority of ignorance. But at least it is an illustration.

There was sense in the Old Testament insistence: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing of the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation." This, then, is the question: *What handle can God get hold of in your life?* Upon what basis can he have fellowship with you? What is there in you that he can do business with?

You may get great loss out of prayer, or little or nothing out of it, unless you see a great deal in God, go in for God rather than prayer, and have in your life that by means of which God can carry on his transactions within you. You get out of prayer what you put into it!

II

There is no sense in your praying—it will only be a waste of time!—*unless you are humble and teachable and believing.* Humble, because of your sense of need and because of your awareness that you have by no means attained the best that is possible for you. Humility is a healthy discontent with attainment. Teachable, because you realize how limited your knowledge of the facts and values of life is. Teachableness is a subjection of wants to needs. Believing, because of your confidence that there is help available somewhere beyond the human. It may be no more than the prayer of the man who said: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." It may only be faith that faith is possible. But that at least it must be.

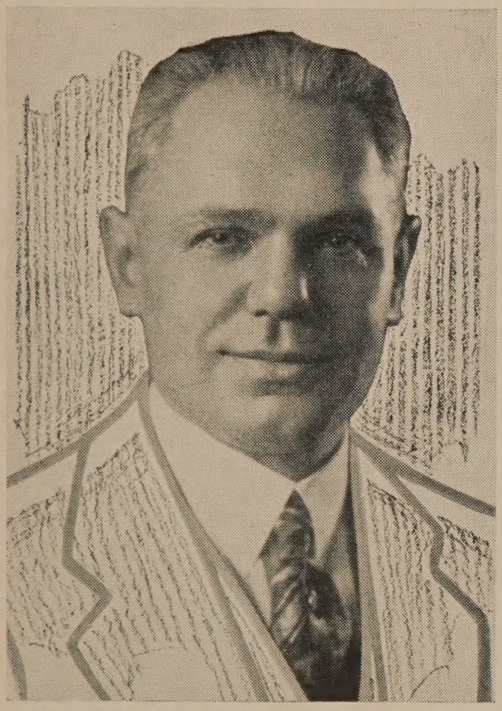
Here then is the threefold condition upon which you are entitled to pray. You must be humble. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." That is the prayer of humility. You must be teachable. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, that I (and others) may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." That is the prayer of the teachable. You must believe. "And he went forward a little, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, My Father, my Father! If it be possible, let this cup pass: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." That is the prayer of faith.

Let us not quibble about words. One may say, and say truly, that one can pray only if one has a sense of sin. But we here call it humility, because the greatest saint is characterized by the insight that he is the chief of sinners. He alone is in a position to see how far the actual really is from the ideal. There is no cure for conceit like character! One may say, and say truly, that one can pray only if one has penitence. But repentance means rethinking. We here call it teachableness, because the keenest Christian minds have at best seen only a reflection in a mirror; they have cried: "Light, light, more light!" One may say, and say truly, that one can pray only if one has a sense of God. But the concurrent testimony of religionists everywhere is that hope is the first letter of the alphabet with which men write all the beautiful names of God. If a man has hope in his world, he is no wholly without God in the world. If he experiences anticipation, if he believes that power exists to back up improvability, he is ready for prayer. Let a person be humble enough to sense his need, and teachable enough to wish to know, and believing enough to trust the future, and he is in a position to pray.

I remember, as if it were yesterday, sitting in classroom, confronted by the twelve alleged parts of prayer:

Meditation, aspiration, adoration, recollection, thanksgiving, praise, contrition, confession, faith, supplication, petition, intercession. Daily that dozen distressed me as confusion worse confounded. Then of a sudden these words rushed to mind: "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of all them that diligently seek him." Or, in a freer translation: A man who would approach God must have faith in his existence and in his willingness to reward those who try to find him.

There, in one sentence, you have all the conditions for prayer. If you are humble, if you stand ready to



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have your life changed; if you are teachable, if you try to find him; if you believe in the existence of the power to reward your search—then you are fit to join the ranks of the real pray-ers.

III

Those who meet these conditions may expect definite results. What do we get out of prayer? *An ability!* The first thing you will get out of prayer is more power to pray. This is so obvious a fact that many of us miss it. Yet no fact is more important. Let me try to rivet it into your consciousness.

Here is a youngster. She meets the proper conditions for playing the piano. She has an instrument, an instructor, and takes time to practice. What does she get out of playing? The question answers itself. More power to play! Here is another youngster. He plays baseball. He meets the proper conditions for playing. He gets to a diamond. It may be a very rough diamond, with bases badly improvised; but some sort of diamond he must have. He has a bat, a ball, and other players, though between them they may share but a frugal supply of gloves. What is the result of his baseball playing? Until his muscles play him false—and a man is an octogenarian in baseball at thirty-five!—his playing will result in more power to play. Here is still another youngster. He aims to know how to speak in public. Perhaps he wants to be a lawyer or an auctioneer or a preacher. Or perhaps he is under the delusion that public speaking will stand him in good stead if ever he should enter the estate of matrimony. He meets the conditions for speech of this sort. He gets an audience, be it ever so young or so bored. He struggles manfully to transfer the scene of his vocal activities from his throat to his diaphragm. He goes through the ghastly disciplines designed to tone up his voice. What does he get out of speaking? More power to speak!

When therefore the question is asked: What does one get out of prayer, the answer is so simple and natural as all this: More power to pray! Hidden manna! An unseen ability, an invisible competence! In prayer, practice makes perfect. Pascal heard an inner voice, saying: "Thou wouldst not seek me, hadst thou not already found me." That is one of the great discoveries men have made in prayer. That has immensely augmented their power to pray. They have learned that prayer is not dependent on emotion. To be sure, there are times when prayer immensely heightens emotion. They are never effaced from our memories. That is what Plotinus referred to when he said that he had really prayed but four times in his life. That is what Lowell was speaking of when he wrote:

> I that still pray at morning and at eve . . .
> Thrice in my life perhaps have truly prayed,
> Thrice, stirred below my conscious self, have felt
> That perfect disenthrallment which is God.

But the man who knows his praying does not rely upon feelings or moods. Take Jesus. The one fact that stands out about him is that when he prayed he met Somebody! He "felt a presence that disturbed him with the joy of elevated thoughts." Doctor Fosdick truly says that men often say they do not pray because God is not real to them, but that a truer statement of the case would be that God is not real to them because they do not pray! This is the first thing a person gets out of prayer—more power to pray; more assurance of the validity of the spiritual; more sense of the reality of God.

IV

What do we get out of prayer? *An Amen!* An inner responsiveness; hidden manna! In prayers, we say Amen *the* last; through prayer, we say Amen *at* last. Amen! With the use of that word, we end our prayers; but if our prayers are prayer, they end in the meaning of that word. To say that this word means: "So be it," or "So mote it be!" is to put it too mildly.

Someone reports this reply to the question: "Do you know what Amen means?" "It means, Yes, Lord, I'm with it, and I'll stand my share of the expenses." Amen is an agreement to live up to. Prayer, which makes us feel "a presence that disturbs us with the joy of elevated thoughts" also makes us feel a presence that disturbs us with the thrill of elevated hopes. Amen is the clasp of

comradeship; the saying: "Lord, I am for this, too!" Now, it is this Amen which prayer produces.

What de we get out of prayer? *An answer!* There are three answers God can make to prayer: Yes, No, Wait! The latter, which comes so often, we are most impatient with. But "wait" it is; we are to see what God is going to do about it; we are to stand by, and to stand by that order to wait, at whatever cost—and the cost is often, O, so high! We would despair of enduring that answer to prayer, not to mention the negative one, were it not for the way in which God answers prayer. Conceivably, he could answer without us. But, so far as it is divinely possible, he never does. He answers through and in us.

This is what the philosophers of religion mean when they say that the transcendence of God is *in* rather than *of* human attributes. Prayer is that intimacy between the divine and the human through which God's will gets done. "An upright man," said James (that is, one who meets the proper conditions), "can *do* a great deal when he prays." A great deal, indeed! He gets out of prayer *the power to be his own answer;* to carry out his own prayers under the guidance of God. Prayer is not a labor-saving device, but a task-producing one. The mystics called prayer the hardest kind of work. For when you really pray, you have to do something about it. You get off your knees to get onto your feet.

Prayer makes you feel a presence that disturbs you with the toil of elevated tasks. It brings spiritual staying power. You become all a-tingle with expectancy over the outcome of the understanding at which God and you have arrived. Prayer sets up the inner sentinel. It eventuates in our saying, not in a tone of resignation, but in a shout of resolution: "Thy will be done!" When we pray aright we become able to pray, we become Amens to our prayers, we become answers to our prayers. When we make ourselves answers to our prayers, we make Amens of other folks.

SOLOMON, the wisest of all rulers, prayed for an understanding heart. Today we who have faith in God have an even greater responsibility than Solomon. We see countries torn by revolution and persecution, religious liberty and faith in God challenged and declining; whereas we have religious freedom, peace and comparative prosperity. These conditions have come through the spiritual vision and courage of our ancestors.

When I am asked what we can do now—surely pray for an even greater understanding of God's laws, and obey our Lord's commands in having one God and loving our neighbor as ourselves. This can be done only by the spiritually minded. It seems to me that we have been swayed too much by modern materialism, which says, "Get your economics right, and the kingdom of God will be here." That was not Jesus' message. Wealth doesn't mean happiness, any more than poverty means piety. The road is much harder than that, and economics will not make it into a highway. The kingdom of God is within us, and we must seek that first. When we do, the way, though narrow, is a way, and my advice to those who are bogged is to try it.

LADY ASTOR.

The Adventure Of the Soul

By JOHN S. STAMM

As I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, To an Unknown God. Acts 17:22.

THE center of interest for the Apostle Paul, as he observed the objects of worship in Athens, was an altar which indicated a religious value unknown to the worshipers in this "very religious" city. There is nothing in the account of the discovery to suggest that in construction this altar was unique. In type and material it was evidently similar to, if not identical with, all the other objects of worship. That which really distinguished it was its indefiniteness. It represented an unknown good. All the other altars were related to religious values in terms of experience, but this altar pointed to a good wholly outside the realm of the experience of these worshipers. It was an altar to an unknown God.

It does not, however, follow that this altar had no religious significance in the thought and life of these Athenians. In fact it was its significance which so greatly challenged the Apostle Paul. The altar bore convincing testimony to the fact that in all their worship there remained an unsatisfied yearning in the hearts of the worshipers. The objects of worship lacked inclusiveness; therefore, this added altar was erected.

As an object of worship pointing to an unrealized good, it had great significance. Every worth-while institution represents an unsatisfied longing. The fullest meaning of any institution is not in the customs incorporated or the practices promoted, but in the longings represented. This altar represented a spiritual value greatly desired but unknown to these Athenians. Whenever any institution ceases to represent such a longing it ceases to be vitally related to life, and therefore loses meaning and challenge.

A fuller study of this altar suggests a threefold significance.

I

This altar expressed not only the basic human urge to worship, but also an adventure of the soul in an endeavor to lay hold upon religious values outside of the realm of immediate knowledge and intellectual grasp. Man is a worshiping being. The pathway of human development is marked by altars of worship. This urge to worship may be suppressed by different interests and activities, but it cannot be destroyed. Man may for a season deny himself the enrichment of life which comes through worship, but in his moments of most normal self-expression he instinctively worships.

In his endeavor to find help through worship, man often faces a conflict, sometimes real and sometimes imaginary, between the emotions of the heart and the conclusions of the intellect. The heart urges an outreach after unrealized good, but the intellect seeks to

erect caution signs. The heart yearns, the intellect attempts to define. Man must think his religion as well as feel it; but he must also feel his religion as well as think it. To worship that which has no meaning in thought is to lose its meaning in experience. The intellect has its rightful place in worship, yet the heart also has its place. The Apostle Paul emphasized this fact when he said that prayer must be in the spirit but also with the understanding.

In worship the soul often makes contact with reality even though the intellect cannot fully chart the way of approach. Faith goes beyond reason, not contrary to reason, but beyond its conclusions. It reaches into the realm of reality where for the moment the intellect

JOHN S. STAMM

cannot furnish adequate interpretation. It is not always easy to reconcile these two elements in worship. Both have their rightful place, and should never become mutually exclusive. Faith should never claim that which is contrary to reason, but reason dare not paralyze the soul. In true worship all the powers of personality find complementary expression. A divided personality cannot worship effectively. Both heart and mind are included in worship.

Two attitudes tend to intensify this conflict:

First, the effort to define with such finality both the object and the experience in worship that there is little room left for added discoveries in experience or fuller interpretations. Such an attempt leads to an enslaving conformity in terms of ritualism, formalism, dogmatism, and therefore to spiritually depleted worship.

Second, the endeavor to limit spiritual reality to that which has been fully demonstrated through the principles of the physical sciences. Much valuable help has come through the scientific method. Scientific knowledge has brushed away many false conceptions and brought emancipation to the human spirit in many areas of thought and life. Truth has been discovered in its fuller meaning and power. All this is a great contribution to humanity. But scientific discoveries have their limitation. Scientific research is not a complete discipline. There are large areas of truth which the principles of physical science cannot comprehend. To limit worship to scientifically demonstrated truth is to enslave it. Trying to reduce spiritual reality to the physical, is to reduce it to nothingness. There are many things which we prize highly and find most valuable in life which cannot be fully demonstrated in terms of science.

It is in this realm of soul adventure that this ancient altar has significance. These worshipers dared to enter the realm of the unknown. They did not deny the soul its right because the intellect could not chart the way. Turning from the more fully defined altars they built another altar as an adventure of the soul. They opened the gates to the realm of the unknown and through worship sought to lay hold upon the larger good. This soul adventure is an essential in worship. There are values yet unclaimed; there are pathways of faith yet largely untrod, and there are new discoveries awaiting the soul in worship.

II

This altar also represents a questing spirit.

The Athenians were known for their zeal in a search after new values. The account given in the book of Acts seems to indicate that they were overzealous in their questing. They are reported as having "spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing." They had become obsessed with the urge to find something new, not necessarily some new implications of the truth. They were more distinctly curiosity seekers than truth seekers. They wanted the thrill of something new, rather than emancipation through the truth.

This fact should, however, not cause us to miss the significance of the questing spirit. To be a worshiper one must have a responsive soul and an inquiring mind. God can come into man's experience meaningfully only through the processes of thought. Not passivity, but aggressive thought activity makes worship meaningful. To worship God in spirit and in truth demands the rallying of all the powers of personality. It implies a quickening of spirit in terms of spiritual questing. How often worship loses its significance and challenge because there is lacking this attitude of search. True worship is a quest.

The questing spirit in worship builds its own approaches. The Athenians built a new altar. Their objects of worship did not meet the total need of a life; they did not bring satisfaction. The altar of worship must ever bring help to the soul. It must also constantly call for a new advance into enriched experiences. No one can maintain a questing spirit in conventional and routine worship. There must be a constant enlargement and enrichment of the objects of worship.

The questing spirit also seeks to build an adequate approach in thought. It takes time to worship; but it also takes time to prepare for worship. Many people miss the larger good in worship because they are too hurried and rush into worship. They are so busy with things that they fail to give themselves to the needed discipline of thought and emotion as a preparation for worship. This is tragically true in private worship, but also true in group worship. Three things are implied in the building of such an approach. First, concentration of thought until a sense of spiritual reality bursts in upon the soul. Second, meditation upon the meaning of this reality until a deep sense of personal need moves the soul. Third, such a complete personal surrender to this reality that a new experience of spiritual life and power fills the soul. It is such an approach which many men need to build today. We need to prepare our souls for worship through the discipline of thought.

The questing spirit seeks to build an approach through an attitude of quietness and trust. The rush of business and pleasure seems constantly to be upon us. Hurry, worry and excitement are all about us. In such a world order it is not easy to become quiet and be assured that God is. It is not easy to believe that all things can work for our good. One of the greatest dangers which confronts the world today is the fact that so many people have lost the art of quietness, and the reinforcement of an abiding trust in God.

The questing spirit builds an approach of personal endeavor. Personal endeavor means personal presence, participation, readiness to act in harmony with the Word of God; and a full commitment of life to God. Failure to build this approach means impoverished lives and a weakened church. If only men would give themselves to worship there would come newness of life and power. The larger good would soon be found.

This altar in Athens erected to an unknown God had significance in the spirit it represented. A questing spirit is an essential of worship. Without this there can be no true worship. This is, however, sadly lacking in many churches. Spiritual living for many people has come to be little more than the acceptance of beliefs and membership in the church. Many expect gains through education, through scientific research, but not through worship. Spiritual thought and life have seemingly no challenge for many professed Christians. They are living routine lives and have lost the questing spirit.

III

This altar, however, represents a religious deficiency. The fact that it reveals an adventure of the soul and a questing spirit does not make it an object of worship which necessarily assures fullness of life. This altar lacked the illumination of divine revelation. Where this is lacking man searches, often searches with great earnestness, but left to himself he fails to find. God is disclosed through revelation. Whenever worship lacks the element of revelation, he remains unknown to the worshipers.

Divine revelation is various and manifold. It is expressed in creation. The whole universe bears the marks of divine creatorship, pulsates with the life of God, and discloses his wisdom and power. The whole history of mankind reflects divine thought. God has borne witness to all peoples. The most complete revelation of himself is in Jesus Christ. In him he has made known his eternal purpose of redemptive love through sacrificial self-giving. In the light of this revelation the altar of worship has new significance. God meets man in his search. He does not try to hide himself, but to make himself known. He seeks after man to persuade him to cease from sinning and walk in fellowship with himself. He seeks to bring to man forgiveness, peace and redemption. He seeks to lead man into an ever enriching life of comradeship of life and service. In this revelation, the Christian religion has its great significance.

It was this revelation which was lacking in Athens. The human element was variously and rather elaborately expressed in the objects of worship established, but the light of God was missing. Where this is lacking there is confusion, doubt and fear. This altar has its parallel in our day. Possibly never before has the human element in worship been so fully perfected. In terms of beautiful churches and elaborate worship services, the church is better equipped than ever before. Yet all this perfecting of worship leaves many lives spiritually confused and impoverished.

Why this failure to find God? Is not one reason to be found in the fact that often men depend upon their own skills, and minimize, if not wholly reject, the illumination of divine revelation? There is too great dependence upon man, and not enough dependence upon God. Without the illumination of the disclosure of God in Jesus Christ man fails to find God in term of fullness of life. At times man's dependence upon God has been stressed so greatly that every effort on the part of man was interpreted as useless and futile. In much of the theology of today this note of dependence is however too greatly missing. Salvation is of God, it is not a human achievement. Without God men are lost. Only in the light of his revelation can they find the way to life and joy.

Divine revelation is a disclosure of God. A disclosure in terms of wisdom, power, but also redemptive love. It is also a disclosure of man. Man is of such infinite worth that God chooses him for his own fellowship. It makes a great difference whether a man worships simply as a suppliant seeking divine favor or whether in worship he enters into communion of soul in fellowship with God. It is also a disclosure of the world. A world in which God is operative. A world which through its discipline has the capacity of releasing personal worth. Not a world without problems, perplexities, pains, losses and disappointments, but a personality producing world because in it God is actively working. Such a faith in God, in man and in the world, is needed in worship. It comes not through search, but through revelation. In the revelation of God in Jesus Christ hope, peace, quietness and victory are assured.

When Paul found this altar to an unknown God, he did not photograph it and write a lecture to set forth its strange character. He took his place with the

worshipers and said, "What therefore ye worship in ignorance this I set forth unto you." In sympathetic comradeship he sought to lift their horizons and let the light of revelation shine in. They were seeking the God who satisfies. Paul had found him, and would make him known to them.

There are today millions worshiping at the altar of the unknown God. Some in areas where the truth in Christ is yet unknown, some where this truth is known but its meaning misunderstood. It should be our purpose to help others to enter into life by sharing with them the knowledge of the God who brings fullness of life. The greatest need of our day is a new discovery of God in terms of redemption. We who know his power to save must share this knowledge with others.

When the light of divine revelation of God in Christ falls upon the altar of worship, it ceases to be an altar to an unknown God and becomes an altar where men find God.

Work for Everyone

By C. Marshall Muir

The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest. Matthew 9: 37, 38.

TODAY unemployment is a blight upon our land. So frightful is it that the federal government is focusing the attention of the nation upon it. To determine its extent, a country-wide census has recently been taken. Now while national unemployment holds the stage I want to call your attention to another kind of unemployment even more widespread and devastating in its effect.

I refer to the unemployment in the Christian church, an unemployment all the more tragic because it is so needless. In our national industries there has not been, and there is not now, enough work to give employment to all who want it. On the other hand, in the Christian enterprise there is plenty of work to be done but few people are working at it.

Realist that he was, Jesus saw such a situation even in a day when people were flocking to him. To those standing about he said, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few." When I read those words a few weeks ago I thought of the great wheatfields which I saw in Saskatchewan. They were miles and miles in extent. They reached from horizon to horizon. In the early summer I used to stand and watch the wind sweeping across the wheat, changing great patches from yellow green to blue green and back again. As harvest time approached there were ever-shifting areas of gold and silver yellow. Now there were not nearly enough people in the little homesteads dotted across the prairie to garner in such a harvest. A few weeks before harvest everyone was wondering if enough harvesters would come to get in the golden grain before it spoiled. But just in time an army of harvesters from the south arrived and the crop was not lost. I frequently found myself asking, "Suppose they should not come?"

In our Christian enterprise today that is no supposition. It is a reality. Our world, our city, this part of it where Bellefield Church is, is a great field, not of grain, but of human life ready to be harvested. But we do not have enough Christians at work to do the job.

THE ABUNDANT HARVEST

The extent of that harvest can be seen when we inspect it through Jesus' eyes. Before he spoke about the harvest he had seen it. Matthew tells us that "when he saw the multitudes he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd." Have you ever seen a lost little boy? In the crowd he suddenly looks around for his father and cannot find him. A look of panic and consternation takes the place of the smile upon his face. The world, but a moment before familiar and kindly, is suddenly sinister and strange.

We pity the lost little boy, but if we would but look out through Jesus' eyes upon the men and women about us we would have even greater compassion on them. For they are God's children, nothing more than little girls and boys who have lost their heavenly Father and are alone and afraid in a world they do not understand. Such is our plight today. A few years ago Oswald Spengler warned us that Caesarism threatens the world. As he put it, the reason lies in the fact that, as in ancient Rome when it was overrun by the hordes who crowded in from the provinces, the people in our cities today are no longer a community. They are but an aggregation, possessing no common moral or spiritual bond and lacking the ties which make for security and peace. Thus they are the prey of unscrupulous Caesars or dictators who promise to bind them again to land and to home.

Take the people who live in the district about our church, for example. By no stretch of the imagination can they be called a community. They are an aggregation. From the four corners of the earth have they come. Most of them have drifted in from little towns, uprooted from familiar ways, from families and from moral and spiritual ties which in other places gave worth and meaning to life and made them responsible members of a community. In this place they are merely here. They have no bonds uniting them to others living in the same block, no familiar folkways to regulate and discipline them. Lonely and afraid, they frantically seek to mend the fragile vessel of life which has been broken.

IN A NEW WORLD

If this is true of the people living about Bellefield Church, it is no less true of the people living at every crossroads and in every city across the world today. Modern science and technology have broken the bonds which formerly tied people together in home and hamlet. Men and women have suddenly found themselves strangers in a world which they can neither understand nor control. In such a state they are ready to follow any leader who promises to give them what they have

lost. Indeed, the Christian church has never had such an opportunity to give a lost world Jesus Christ and, in his name, "to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

You cannot possibly escape it. "The harvest truly is plenteous"—if you will but lift up your eyes to see!

THE CHURCH'S GREATEST OPPORTUNITY

"But the laborers are few!" We may as well face facts. The Christian church is today confronted with the greatest opportunity it has ever had. There is a tremendous harvest to be gathered in but only a few Christians are working. There is plenty of work for Christians to do but most of them are unemployed.

Take the matter of church attendance. In worship the Christian renews the ties which bind him to the Christian community and to God. It is the most important part of a Christian's vocation. Yet we live in a day when people joke about Protestant attendance at worship. There is nothing funny about it, however. What chance has the Protestant church to get in its share of "the plenteous harvest" when, roughly, but one-third of its members attend church regularly, another third is seen at church only occasionally and still another third never goes at all? Worship is a Christian's first duty and privilege, but considerably more than a majority are unemployed at it.

Moreover, far too many Christians are unemployed at the study of their religion and of their Bible. We know today that it is not enough for a person merely to have faith; he must know the implications of that faith for Christian living in a complex modern world. Nevertheless, the enrollment in Protestant church schools is decreasing. And, in a day when adult education is rightly commanding the attention of everyone, adult Christians in particular have divorced themselves from any sort of Christian education. In studying "to show themselves approved unto God, workmen who need not be ashamed" they are woefully unemployed.

Our church clubs and groups organized for service projects suffer a languorous desuetude because they are undermanned. They are paralyzed by a lack of the talent they need to make their work effective. There is so much to be done in a cruelly suffering society but worthy human needs go unmet and urgent pleas must go unanswered.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED AFRESH

Of even greater importance, however, is our unemployment at our essentially Christian task of evangelism. Paul said: "We are ambassadors, therefore, on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us." In a thoroughly pagan world nothing is more needed than Christian ambassadors of good will, men and women committed to the winning of persons to the sovereignty of Jesus Christ and their integration in the Christian community. But here Christians are doing less even than in worship, Christian education and service projects. From every mission and church field the cry goes up: "Send us, give us more men to bear witness for Christ's sake!" And the cry goes unanswered.

Such is the tragedy of Christian unemployment. The world is sick for the healing which Christ alone can give. The harvest lies waiting, and the day when it can be gathered in may soon be past. Chill rains of world disaster, the cold winter of doubt and despair which is creeping over our thinking, and the mold of pagan ideologies may soon make a human harvest for Christ impossible.

Nevertheless, the church has everything to consummate its harvest. In the secular world when we want to get something done we must create a new organiza-

C. Marshall Muir

tion to do it. The church of Jesus Christ is already organized; it is the oldest organization in the world. Within it are tradition, history and the experience of centuries of dealing with human beings. It has martyrs. It has the Bible. It has the dream of the ideal Kingdom of God as a goal. Greater than all of these it has Jesus Christ. It has everything needed for a glorious harvest, except one thing. It does not have working Christians. "Christ has no hands but our hands to do his work today." Yet those hands hang idly down. By the failure of his followers, Christ's church is powerless to garner its greatest harvest, the Kingdom of God is at a standstill and Christ is crucified afresh.

Such a situation is intolerable. I refuse to be resigned to it. Hence I am resolved that from this day on there is going to be an end to the Christian unemployment in Bellefield church. The other day a man said to me, "Your church is just a preaching station, isn't it?" Never have I been so simultaneously ashamed

and indignant. Was that all that could be said for Bellefield Church? Is it just a mouth, and nothing more? No, to be called Christian our church must be infinitely more than a mouth. It must be no less than the body of Christ. A mouth it should have, but it must also have a head and feet and hands "swift and beautiful" to do Christ's work in the world. If, lacking these, our church is nothing more than a mouth, let its pulpit be boarded up, let its great organ be dismantled. let the house of worship be torn down and use the space as a parking lot! It would then have more social value than a church that is only a mouth and not the whole, active, working body of Christ. Aye, if in the days to come I am still to preach in this pulpit and be a mouth for this church, then I insist that you people who belong to it shall give it such feet and head and hands as shall turn it from the great company of the Christian unemployed into a working body that shall stop at nothing to get Christ's harvest in. I am resolved that henceforth Christ shall not be able to say of this church: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few."

WORK FOR EVERYONE

In that case, let me tell you that there is harvest work here for everyone to do. The first thing to be done is to pray. When Jesus faced his first lack of workers, he promptly told his disciples the very first thing to be done. "Pray ye," he said. "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." No church has ever been worthy of the name that has not first been a praying church. Are you praying for this church? Are you praying for the Christian community in the world? I would like to know how many of you are praying for the church. Shall I ask you to raise your hands? Or would it be too embarrassing? Instead, suppose we say that a year from now we will ask those who have been praying for Christ's great harvest to raise their hands. At all events, you see my point. To rid ourselves of our Christian unemployment the first step is to pray. Today begin praying to the Lord of the harvest "that he will send forth laborers into his harvest" and God will do two things. He will show you the work he wants you to do. And he will open the floodgates of his power into your life for the doing of that work.

Moreover, your prayers will make effective the ministry of your pew. There is a ministry of the pew. In my early days as a minister I had a church which in place of pews had folding theater seats. I never liked those theater seats. They mocked every service of worship we held in that church by their silent testimony that the church service was a spectacle to be seen. They mocked every sermon I preached by their witness that a sermon, like a play, was merely a performance to be selfishly enjoyed. Now a pew, your pew, is something entirely different. It has a ministry all its own. Sometimes, when you are not in it, it is a Satanic ministry. For then the weary and heavy laden who have come to church to find God and to feel the moral reinforcement of the Christian community see your empty pew and say: "So-and-so has found his automobile, or the radio, or 'a little folding of the hands in sleep' far more important than God this morning!" But when you are in your pew, your family and your friends by your side, your pew is alive wiith a vital ministry. It cries aloud that all may hear: "This day, to this man and his house, God is more important than anything else in the world!"

AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

Indeed, you will not have been praying about this harvest very long before you will see new work to be done in the church school. You will feel the need of more study to understand the Christian message and program. If you have been trained for educational work, God will undoubtedly call upon you to devote your talents to teaching. And in clubs and groups for Christian service projects, the same thing will happen. Once begin praying about God's harvest and you will no longer wait until the minister asks you to do something only to hasten to refuse him. You will think of things to do and then telephone your minister to volunteer your services.

Greater than all else, however, your praying will arouse you to become an active ambassador for Christ to others. You will eagerly "do the work of an evangelist," as one sent to others needing Christ's redemption, "as though God were entreating by you." Of course, the Christian—not the Satanic—ministry of your pew is one kind of evangelism. But equally important is another kind of evangelism in which we actively seek not only to bring men and women into our church, but to bring them, as the old phrase has it, "to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ."

Once someone asked me if we have prayer meeting services in our church. When I said no, he proceeded to tell me that the pulse of a church is its prayer meeting. I most emphatically disagree. The true pulse of this church, of any church, is to be found in the number of its members who, seeing the multitudes, are filled with compassion on them, pray the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest and, having prayed, go forth among the multitudes with Christ's name upon their lips to bring them unto him.

WAGES AND HOURS

Now, since we have been speaking about unemployment, it is fitting that, in conclusion, I should say a word about the wages and hours. As to hours, Christ does not expect you to do everything in the church. All he wants is that, remembering the fate of the one-talent man who failed to use his talent, you put your talent, not in a napkin, but to work somewhere in the Christian harvest for Christ. I think it is Anatole France who describes how a juggler was one day found juggling a handful of balls before the cathedral altar. It was the one thing he could do for God. So, no matter what your talent may be, set it to work for God. He will always find a way to use it.

As to wages, "the laborer is worthy of his hire." You will be paid in the coin of God's realm, something far more precious than money. Jesus said: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the

joy of thy Lord." Those who labor in love for Christ "enter into the joy of their Lord," not only at some future season of reward, but at the moment they cease their idleness and begin their Master's work.

One of the unlooked-for and happiest results of our recent Centennial Observance was the unguided, spontaneous decision of our recently organized high school group to call themselves "The Robert E. Speer Society." In his letter acknowledging what they had done, Dr. Speer had this to say: "And please tell them how much I appreciate their good will and how much I hope they may have in their lives such joy and satisfaction, such wealth of friendship as I have had. No other service can compare with Christ's service. No other Master can be named with him." And such can be your wages, too, if you will but set to work at Christ's great harvest.

Aye, my fellow Christians, while you are thinking of the blight of our national unemployment, have the grace to think of the tragic, needless unemployment in Christ's church today. Look with Christ's eyes upon the multitudes, see them scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd, and hear his voice, so stirring as to arouse you from your idleness and indifference: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest!"

Pray. Pray. Then you will hasten to do the work God has marked with your name.

Stop! Look! Listen!

By G. Ray Jordan

The people were astonished at his teaching. Matthew 7:29.

Hear, and your soul shall live. Isaiah 55:3.

Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap. Galatians 5:7.

THE familiar railroad sign—Stop! Look! Listen!—speaks clearly and forcefully for itself. But these words suggest something more vital than mere physical protection. The very safety of society depends upon our willingness to obey their injunction.

Certainly the people who refuse to give heed to the voices that shout for attention will never be of any aid to the world, or to any group that is seeking to save the world from all possible mistakes. Those who turn deaf ears to the prayers of humanity, or even to the demands of the unreasonable, are not in a position to deal satisfactorily with the intricate difficulties of human society.

It is true that there are people who have what may be termed "indoor minds." But what a tragedy that is! In writing a story concerning Russia shortly after the downfall of the old regime, Raymond Robbins described how the privileged classes had gone the rounds in their isolated and apparently self-sufficient lives. They thought that they were adequately protected. They seemed to have no reason for refusing to indulge in rounds of careless gaiety. Mr. Robbins tells how they had their silken curtains drawn across their windows through which they were unable to detect the black, ominous forces moving in the dark night of the common life of Russia. Because theirs were indoor minds, they refused to let their thoughts and imaginations go out into those vast open spaces where a new order was gathering momentous force. We now know that it was a tragic mistake. It always is a serious mistake for people to refuse to heed what is going on in their world. Our very safety depends upon our willingness to look and listen. In even a wider sense than Isaiah meant, those who want life will surely hear!

There are voices to which every single one of us ought to be listening today. Of course, we may stop our ears because we do not like what they say. Or because we live indoors, we may refuse to give them any attention whatsoever. But that is the very antithesis of wisdom.

THE RAUCOUS VOICES OF RUSSIA

We need to hear, for instance, what is being said in modern Russia. It is a large part of our world. When Mrs. E. M. Delafield, author and traveler, asked her Soviet guide what would happen if a child, by any chance, should receive religious instruction at home, she received this reply: "He would come to school, and find that all the other children laughed at such things and every day he would be taught that there is no God and religion is all superstition—and very soon he would just think that his parents were rather stupid people."

We cannot afford to ignore the message of that conversation. It is too typically representative of a widespread idea that has shaped the destinies of millions of people. We had better listen long enough to discover how many people there are who feel this way. They are not all confined to Russia! To be sure, most of them do not talk so brusquely and so loudly, but they feel just about this same way.

Then there are those whose voices are raucous and bitter with hate. Dr. Goebbels is an illustration, even if an exaggerated one. "A Jew is for me an object of physical disgust," he says. "I vomit when I see one . . . Christ cannot possibly have been a Jew. I don't have to prove that scientifically. It is a fact. . . I treasure an ordinary prostitute above a married Jewess."

There are many words like that today. They are not confined to expressions of racial antipathy. They disclose class antagonism and the smoldering flame of personal hate. We had better be hearing them.

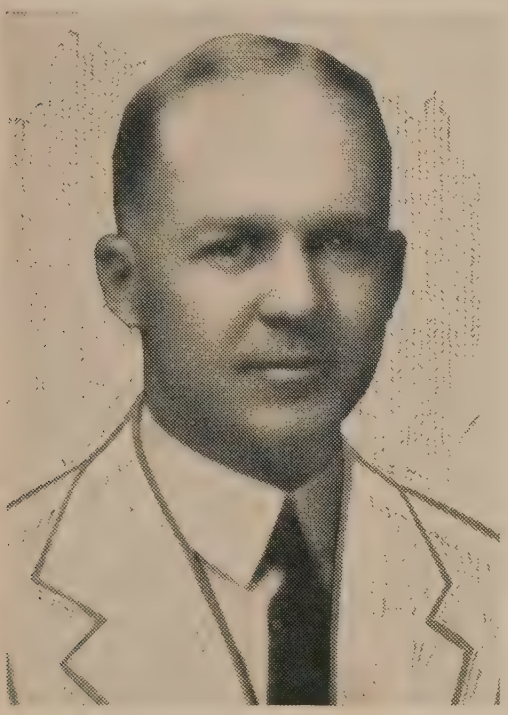
Yes, there are all kinds of voices speaking today. Some of them are raucous and loud. Others are careful whispers which may be heard only by those who, wise enough to do so, cuff their hands to their ears in order to learn what humanity is saying when it is expressing its most earnest thought.

A TIME TO LOOK—AND THINK

We had better stop long enough, not merely to hear, but also to look at things as they are, to ponder seriously the real facts of modern life. There is not much chance of any person finding his way out of the confused perplexity that confronts all of us unless he is willing to think. Frank and honest consideration of

facts, of life, of humanity, is imperatively necessary, if we discover any roadway of safety. To be sure, there are many people who are going along their way blithely, without hesitating either to look at facts, or to listen to other people. But they will never do anything for the welfare of society. There are trends and forces in our contemporary life that any wise person must learn properly to evaluate, or he will be swept off his feet and driven over some cataract, before he even realizes what is happening.

Let us seriously ponder this most sobering fact of life today: not the mere lack of attention to religion, but the failure to believe that it is vital. The book fair which was held in New York a few months ago, under



G. Ray Jordan

the joint auspices of the Book Publishers Association and the *New York Times,* arranged what was called a library for a model home. In this library there were attractively displayed five hundred books, selected by various committees. Incidentally, these books were the ones which had been placed in the White House as a gift from the publishers. But, as has been painfully observed, there was no section for books on religion. The three or four volumes which were included in the list which dealt with religion got in the list as literary classics. There was not a book in the five hundred, in the field of religion, published less than two hundred years ago. As Halford Luccock has disturbingly pointed out, that omission is all too indicative of a characteristic blind spot. It painfully suggests not merely the state of many homes, but also the condition of hearts without number.

I know, of course, that there are hosts of people today who are not disturbed by such trends. There are those who classify themselves with the intelligentsia who feel that they have passed far beyond the "childishness" of religion. Some of them assert that religion is only another bit of emotionalism that is characteristic of those who are ignorant, and who have, therefore, let their feelings run away with them. Unfortunately, there is this regrettable type of religion abroad in the land. There are still a few people who are more concerned about the noise they make than they are with the morals and ethics of their daily lives. Nevertheless, it is rather satirical that some of the so-called intelligentsia who cast aspersions upon the emotionalism of religion—saying that its adherents are swept off their feet by subhuman excitement—themselves imbibe certain liquids so freely that they not merely lose control of themselves, but indulge in emotionalistic behavior which is ridiculously silly. Indeed, most of them would not consider displaying such animalistic characteristics unless the upper levels of their minds were deadened.

Let us be honest and fair enough to stop and consider both the source of much of the criticism which is being made of religion, and also the type of religion condemned.

WHO CAN SAVE SOCIETY?

There are still those who sneeringly say that men only make gods like themselves. For the moment—and only for the sake of argument—accept that as being true. Then let one ask what kind of god he would have on that score. Certainly no one could have a very high type of deity if he were willing himself to slump down to an animal level of existence!

No, the only people who are going to be able to save society today—if society is saved!—are those who have the wisdom to stop and examine honestly the facts of life as they are. Such people will come to see that religion is not one of the electives of life; it is the only redeeming force that can lift mankind out of the morass of animalistic confusion.

For real religion is both moral and ethical. Christianity is essentially a religion of right relationships between all people and between persons and God. Christianity is inherently both ethical and spiritual.

When we amputate either part of its body, we cut the very artery of Christianity. Neither ethics nor morality nor spirituality alone is enough. So Kagawa has written: "From my experience of living among the poor, I am opposed to the idea that it is enough to change their outward environment, or to distribute material goods or cash among them. The economic aspect is only one phase of human activity, and we can never reorganize society from that standpoint alone. The faults of man must be swept away. Social reconstruction is impossible without seeking first a deep spiritual awakening."

Let us stop, look and listen! Let us searchingly ask: Does Christianity really have a message? Is there anything that Christ has to say to this present world of ours? At least let us be fair enough seriously to consider society, humanity and life, as they actually are, before we give an answer. Let us look, moreover, at what is occurring in those parts of the world where

people have definitely said that Christianity has no message of truth for our modern life.

CHRISTIANITY AND OUR DAY

We may assert that Christianity has no appeal for us. Well, there are other causes that do make a dynamic appeal to many people. Fascism does. Communism has swept into millions of minds and hearts. There are literally thousands of people who are ready and willing to pay the price for the conquest of one of these philosophies. They have no doubt about what *they* want. Of course, that may be what some of us desire, too. If so, let those who do be frank enough to say so and honest enough to accept the losses which are involved.

On the other hand, one may just choose to be a cynic. He can sneer at everything as the world goes by. He can laugh at humanity. He can say that the world has no meaning and that all men are either fools or clever enough to have a racket of their own. But let such a man remember that it is impossible to declare a moratorium on the spiritual laws of life. He who follows the course of cynicism will ultimately drink to the bitter dregs the keenest disappointments of the human mind and the most painful sorrows of the human heart. Life being what it is, we do finally reap what we sow. How imperative it is that we stop long enough to ponder this obvious truth!

But each one must decide for himself whether he thinks Christianity has a real mesasge. Is the flesh all? Was Satan right when, in the book of Job, he sneered: "Skin for skin; yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." If he was right, and that is man's highest reach—or even if men come to believe it is—then in the course of time we can look for the kind of class conflict and personal antagonisms which will be so bloody that, if there are any future historians left to tell the story, they will scarcely need pen and ink with which to write.

Let us stop and earnestly consider our modern life. Where is it taking us, and why? Is man all? Is there no God? Does everything depend upon what we do for ourselves? Let enough people become convinced that we who say we believe in God actually do not, and see what occurs.

JESUS AND THE SECRET OF LIFE

There are some of us, however, who are convinced that there was a Man who once lived in Galilee who knew the secret of life. That is why we are certain that sooner or later humanity will become disillusioned about all these fleshly gods. Unfortunately, it may then be too late. But we are so sure that Jesus Christ discovered the secret of life and lived it to its full, that we are perfectly willing to stop, to look, and to listen with any individual who is candid and frank enough to face the facts as they are. Certainly those who think most clearly will want to know what the Master has to say about life. Isaiah summed up the importance of giving attention to the divine voice, when he said: "Hear and you shall live."

Ultimately cynicism, or mad indulgence, or, to speak more technically, the indoor mind, all resolve themselves down to a disregard of both God and his children. There is an old epitaph which comes from England which reads:

> Here lies a miser who lived for himself,
> And cared for nothing but gathering pelf.
> Now where he is or how he fares,
> Nobody knows and nobody cares.

There is another epitaph from that same country which has been quoted around the word. It reads: "Sacred to the memory of Charles George Gordon, who at all times and everywhere gave his strength to the weak; his substance to the poor; his sympathy to the suffering; his heart to God." The spirit of this man, Charles George Gordon, was what it was because he believed that Christianity had a message for the world. There are some of us who are sure that it is the only message that can save the world.

God or Chaos?

By William B. Mathews

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Exodus 20:3.

JESUS said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two great commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

In the early written law this thought was expressed: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." All too often we have thought of this great commandment as a threat rather than a law. We have pictured God up in his beautiful heaven somewhere with a great rod in his hand shaking it threateningly at us and saying: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me; if you do . . ."

How far from the spirit of God this attitude is! This is a great law of God wrought out through the long and painful experiences of men who had sought for God. Men, in their quest, had at times gone after strange gods only to find confusion and defeat, and then, when in penitence they had come back to God, they found peace and life.

BACK OF THE UNIVERSE, ONE GOD

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me," is a great law of life which, if men obey, will lead to the reality of God and the achievement of life. This is the record of history. But history also records that men have gone after other gods—gods of lust, of greed, of material things, of power. Men also have had many and various ideas and conceptions of God, ideas which have not fitted into the facts of our cosmic life, and which later generations have found to be untrue. This following after strange gods has brought defeat.

Out of the great struggle of humanity, in its quest to know God, men have come to feel that back of this

universe there is one God, not many gods. We live in a universe. The universe is best understood as the result of one Mind, not many. One of the great factors at work in the universe is the spirit of unity which, down through the evolutionary process, has been at work in the cosmic order unifying the various elements and, out of this unity, bringing into creation new and higher elements of life. This great unifying spirit of the universe is God, the God and Father not only of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, but the God and Father of all men. With him we must struggle onward. To him we must give our highest allegiance.

Too often we are found struggling against God, while he is struggling on alone. Our ways are not his

William B. Mathews

ways. We give ourselves over to false conceptions of God and his great purpose. We give our allegiance to other gods. But when we do, we come up against the whole cosmic process. We are found struggling against the cosmic order. We are out of harmony with the universe in which we live, and the end is destruction and death. "If ye shall worship other gods, ye shall surely perish," is another way of stating this law of life.

In our universe there is no more fundamental law than that we shall have no other gods before the God in whom we live and move and have our being. Whenever men have forsaken God, they have gone down to defeat. Whenever they have given their allegiance to other gods, they have invited destruction and chaos. This law is written deep into the records of human experience. It stands forth in our modern life to all who have eyes to see, ears to hear and minds to reason. If men break this spiritual law they reap the resultant confusion and discord, chaos and death.

When asked, "Which is the greatest commandment of the law?" Jesus replied: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." All law hung upon this one supreme spiritual law. Jesus also said: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness." Not Caesar's kingdom, but God's! On another occasion Jesus said: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." What he required for himself he required for God. Christianity is a religion of supreme devotion to God. The Christian who is true to the principles of the religion of Jesus must always acknowledge supreme loyalty to God. No Christian can serve two masters; "for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one and despise the other." "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." It is the age-old struggle between God and greed, Christ and Caesar—loyalty to conscience or to government.

CHOOSING GOD TO CAESAR

The disciples of Jesus faced the issue early. When in Jerusalem they were arrested and commanded by the supreme court of their people to cease teaching God's way as revealed by Jesus, their courageous reply was: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to harken unto you rather than unto God, you may judge; for we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard." Very early the Christians came into conflict with the Roman Empire because they placed loyalty to God above loyalty to Caesar. The Christian would not worship Caesar as Lord. Christ was their Lord. Many paid for their loyalty with death. When in the Middle Ages the church had become so enmeshed in the secular state, men again had to make their choice between loyalty to their conscientious conception of God and loyalty to the hierarchy. Luther voiced this choice in his memorable utterance: "Here I stand. I can do nothing else. God help me." Karl Barth, one of Germany's great present day theologians, was forced to make the same choice, as have many others in Germany. When Karl Barth was asked to support the German Aryan church, he said: "What I have to say in this matter is simple—I say no, without reservation or qualification. . . . It is the business of the church to serve the Word of God." And as a result of his convictions he was removed from his professorship in Bonn University and had to leave Germany.

Every generation of men has had to make its choice of obeying God or man. We find the issue dramatized in Sophocles' classic "Antigone," a drama old yet ever new whose truth cannot be dimmed. Antigone rebels against the laws of the state. Her brother has been a traitor to his city and has been put to death. By order of the state his body is to be left unburied as a fitting indignity. But Antigone resolves to give her brother a decent burial. "There is a law of love deeper than the shame of treachery and higher than the law of the state." She responds to this law. She too is condemned to die for her disobedience and to die by starvation. The governor of the city pleads with her: "And did'st thou

dare to disobey these laws?" To which she courageously replied:

> I did not dream thine edicts strong enough
> That thou, a mortal man, should'st overpass
> The unwritten laws of God that know no change.

"The unwritten laws of God that know no change!" These are the laws which undergird the universe. They must underlie the laws of all nations. If we choose these laws of God, we have life; if we reject them, we are undone. "Behold," comes the verdict of the ages, "I have set before you life and death. . . . Therefore, choose life."

TRUSTING IN FORCE RATHER THAN GOD

In few generations has the issue been drawn more sharply than our own. In our modern world multitudes do not place their highest trust in the God of the universe. We talk about loyalty to God and love of God and faith in God; but what does it mean in vital living experience? Prof. John MacMurry has pointed out to us in his book, *Creative Society,* the vast difference between belief in the idea of God and belief in God. When Jesus pictures for us in figurative language and in undying words how God, in the final analysis, judges men, he points out that there will be two groups: the accepted and the rejected. The basis of his judgment will be not a profession of belief in his existence, but the type of behavior toward one's fellow men. God is interested not so much in what our lips profess as in what our lives confess.

There are multitudes who profess a faith in God, but their behavior reveals that faith as a belief in God's existence rather than a commitment of life to him. Even in the church it is a minority of Christians who put their trust in God as the ultimate power. The great majority of Christians, while professing a faith in God, put their trust in the pagan philosophy of force rather than in God. Many will say: "Yes, we believe in God and the Christian principles, but in the kind of world we live in we must have a large, well prepared military force to defend us." They put their trust in force as the ultimate power in the world. They do not trust in God.

As the issue is drawn more sharply the difficulties confronting the followers of God increase. Men still try to hold to God, but they cling more tenaciously to the material securities. These seem to be more real and to offer greater security. Men find it increasingly difficult to cleave to God's way and to mammon's way at the same time. God has become less real. His way seems less secure. A minority cleave to his way as offering the greatest security. The great Teacher anticipated this when he said: "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto life, and few be they that enter therein." Those who do, find God and life.

A WAY OF DESTRUCTION

The many who follow the broad way which leads to destruction are worshipers not of the God of the universe but of the gods of mammon. It is the way of selfishness. In it men seek first their own interests and that of their group or nation. These interests must be maintained against others by force. Men exalt the way of force because they want things which cannot be secured except by force.

This reliance upon the pagan philosophy of force is creating such a denial of God today as few recent generations have witnessed. Many have turned to other gods. The worship of God is neglected. The call of the sanctuary of God is ignored. The altar of God's Holy Spirit is often replaced by the altar of Mars. The symbol of its sacrifice is become the sword instead of the cross. The multitudes are regimented to listen to the voice of men, rather than given the freedom to follow the will of God. The worship of Caesar is in the ascendancy. In some nations it has come into full power, and the free worship of God is gone. Men are creating gods in their own image. They have built up political states after their ideals. By increasing power the state gains supreme authority over the total life of men. The totalitarian state becomes the object of supreme devotion.

THE PERIL OF NATIONALISM

Nationalism seeks supremacy. It seeks the end of effective Christianity. Wherever it is in the ascendancy Christianity is seriously threatened if not driven to the wall or altogether stamped out. Russia turned savagely upon the Christian church and outlawed it. Under Fascist control in Italy the Christian church is divorced from active participation in the state and is reduced to humble subserviance to the Italian totalitarian scheme. In Germany, where the struggle is growing more desperate, religion has been turned into a travesty and a nightmare.

The struggle is on in America. The devotees of Caesar who glorify the pagan way of force and reject the Christian way of love are legion. They introduce legislation demanding loyalty oaths and flag salutes. They seek to intimidate teachers and preachers into teaching only what meets the standards set up by the worshipers of force who place nationalism before Christianity.

This nationalism has become a religion to multitudes. It gathers into it all the elements of religion. Awe and sacredness, sacrifice and devotion, are all there. It has its dogmas, its denominations, its sacred literature. It has its sacred symbols and ceremonies of worship. It has its messiahs. For it multitudes will leave the worship of God to join its ranks. It numbers its devotees by the tens of millions while Christianity numbers its followers by the millions.

Nationalism has become Christianity's supreme rival. It is, in the words of Dr. Edward Shillito, "like a Titan gathering its powers for a supreme struggle with Christianity." It challenges all other religious loyalties. It subordinates everything to the state. It seeks supremacy. It sets itself up in the hearts of men as the god of last appeal, the only present help in time of trouble. In the state men live and move and have their being.

Those who would place loyalty to God above loyalty to the political state or the present economic system are reproached and defamed. Champions of human justice and a better social and economic order which would

bring to fulfillment the ideals of God's righteousness are dismissed from their positions wherever pressure can be brought to bear. Even in the Christian church in America when ministers press too insistently the claims of God and Christ over against the claims of the state, they are accused of preaching "socialism" and "communism" and are intimidated by those who would place Caesar above God. Those who would give their highest loyalty to God, who would have no other gods before him are maligned and persecuted.

THE WAY OF JESUS IGNORED

The status quo is held to be sacred, and no one must criticize its fallacies. The way of the Carpenter-Teacher of Nazareth is held in check or set aside whenever and wherever it tends to transform the present order. Even multitudes in the Christian church are so enamored with the present order of things that they will resist any change which threatens their comfortable life, even though those comforts are secured by the sacrifices and through the thwarted lives of their fellow men. Whenever Christianity threatens these inequalities of life, it is rejected.

The devotees of Caesar-worship would regiment all into mammon's way. They would force men to pay tribute to Mars and to place the ultimate trust in the pagan way of force. It is the way which seems right to them, but the end thereof is death, because it repudiates God. It runs against the laws of the universe. Reliance upon force demands ever larger armies and navies. Each nation tries to surpass the others in the insane race of death. The people are burdened with taxes. Natural resources are dissipated. Then when some "leader," drunk with power, strikes the blow, there comes the cataclysm of horrible death and destruction. The intricacies of our social and economic life are distorted. They break down, and millions are left cold and hungry in a world capable of affording an abundance to all. Man goes down to defeat, because he has not yet learned this fundamental fact of life: "If ye worship other gods, ye shall perish."

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me," is a fundamental law of the universe. We must seek to teach it with all diligence. The man or the nation or the peoples who obey this law move down through the eternities with the great cosmic forces. All the cosmic forces are moving toward unity with God. Those who put their trust in the spirit of the eternal God find life. There is no defeat for God. And there is no defeat for the man whose life finds oneness with God. The man who rejects God throws himself against the whole cosmic order, and goes down to defeat.

Jesus chose to cast his all on God. His world thought that he went down to defeat, but he rose to new life and power. Let the righteous man take courage. Let him cleave to God, and he shall find the cosmic and spiritual forces of the universe moving down the eternities with him, bringing harmony out of discord, unity out of chaos, internationalism out of nationalism, good will out of prejudice.

In our exalted moments we, too, want to give our highest allegiance to God. We want to find complete unity with him. We want the power which comes from harmony with him. We want a vital experience with the reality of his Holy Spirit. We, too, cry out: "My soul longeth for the living God." We want God to be near to us, and he will if we come near to him. "Draw near unto God and he will draw near unto you," is also a spiritual law. One Man could say, "The Father and I are one." Let us follow in his train.

A Pastoral Prayer

By Harris Franklin Rall

ONCE more, O God, Thou hast said, Let there be light, and hast brought into being another day and clothed the world in beauty. Once more Thou hast called us from sleep into new life. O Thou Creator God, who dost renew the earth each day, create in us, we beseech Thee, that higher life which we so deeply need. Here, in this hour of worship, we pray Thee to quicken our minds, to stir the imagination of our souls, to break down these narrow barriers that limit our lives and widen the horizons of our sympathy and understanding, to deepen in us the spirit of good will for all kinds and conditions of men and lift us up into fellowship with our God.

We thank Thee for the privilege of worship in this place: for the music and the word, for the worship of hymn and prayer, for the memories of the past that linger here and the living fellowship of the present that strengthens and uplifts. We thank Thee for all those whose service makes possible this hour; for those who by the labor of their hands keep clean and ordered this house of God; for those who teach the childhood and guide the youth of this parish; for those who minister in friendly helpfulness and service in the spirit of Christ; for those whose gifts and plans reach out to serve human need wherever it may be found, in distant lands or near at hand; for those who serve with instrument and voice to lead us in our worship; for those who, though absent, support us with their prayers; for those who bring to this hour the faith and love and spirit of devotion that help to lift us all to God; for the ministers who lead this people, and for the men whose plans and gifts and unselfish toil bring needed support for all this work.

We look beyond our walls and thank Thee for the one fellowship of the followers of Christ to which we all belong; for all congregations which in our own city are joined in worship this hour; for all those people who in many lands, in divers ways and in many tongues, bring their homage to the one God; for all who love man and hate evil and seek the rule of justice and mercy and peace here upon earth. Help us once more to dedicate ourselves to this fellowship and to this God. Amen.

Visual Aids for the Minister

By Edwin T. Buehrer

YEARS ago Dr. Charles E. Jefferson observed how the Catholic Church, with its incense, holy water, bread and wine, way stations of the cross, statues, candles and other accoutrements, constantly appealed to its worshipers through their sense of smell, of touch, of taste and of sight as well as that of hearing. Protestants, having discarded Catholic techniques, have made the serious error of never quite grasping the importance of developing techniques of their own. Not even the motion picture age, the wide use of the stereopticon in the public schools, or the rising tide of illustrated journals, has sufficiently impressed upon us the value of available media of visual education. We have never been sufficiently experimental to overcome our inherited prejudices against the mechanization of church services, preferring to relegate the projector and screen to the field of professional entertainment. It is not difficult to identify this attitude with that of our Protestant forbears who considered pianos, organs and other musical instruments the physical incarnation of the evils of saloons and dance halls, and refused to have them in the churches. And even where the prejudice is not so deep, visual aids are often regarded as mechanical clutter which interferes with rather than aids the process of education and worship.

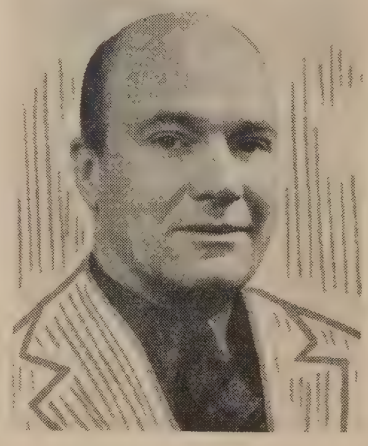
• *Knowledge Through the "Eye Gate"*

But this attitude emphasizes rather than solves the almost insuperable problem of teaching in the church school by the conventional and uninspiring methods which so completely overlook the increasing possibility of reaching the mind and stirring the emotions through the eye. Henry James Forman, author of *Our Movie Made Children,* says that the motion picture screen has become a gigantic educational system, "with an instruction possibly more successful than the present textbook variety, but with a content which . . . makes us disturbingly reflective." He points out, further, that of the facts we remember, approximately 80 per cent come through the eye as over against 20 per cent that come through the ear. Holoday and Stoddard, two other authorities on the subject, have exclaimed: "A universal medium, the screen! Books cannot vie with it." Allowing for a slight discount of such enthusiasm it is nevertheless true that the visual field has been left almost entirely to the movies which we condemn. Most churches have never seriously attempted to provide themselves with even the most elementary equipment, or, having made half-hearted attempts, have given up the project as hopeless. Dust laden and now obsolete projectors, hidden away under a pile of old books or discarded lesson papers, bear mute witness to this fact.

• *Instruments for Visual Education*

There are three basic instruments of visual education.

1. The opaque projector ("Mirrorscope," "Projectoscope," "Reflectoscope" or whatever its name) is designed to reflect on the screen, by



Edwin T. Buehrer

means of mirrors and a powerful light, any picture or printed page or object, such as a hand, a watch, a stone, a leaf, a bug, an insect or a small animal. Anything in fact, from a tiny speck to an object six inches square can be shown, enlarged to any desired size on the screen. An open geography, encyclopedia, Bible or hymnbook can be inserted in the machine, with any six-inch square section of a given page magnified for the class or audience.

2. There is, next, the stereopticon projector. This instrument throws on the screen pictures previously prepared in the form of translucent glass slides. They are made in black and white by a simple photographic process, and are often hand-colored. The stereopticon adapts itself most readily to any classroom or auditorium, and it projects the clearest and most beautiful pictures of all. Whereas the uses of the opaque projector are primarily for informal, far-ranging and far-reaching educational purposes, the stereopticon is best adapted for the glorified presentation of carefully selected pictures and themes. It therefore lends itself ideally for certain types of worship as well as for educational projects.

3. The third instrument is, of course, the motion picture projector. Experience has taught us that the 16 millimeter machine is by all odds the best for school and church use. It is obtainable in sound, and can be safely operated by amateurs. The 16 mm. field, moreover, has the most varied range of educational subjects. The large size film and projector have been developed primarily for professional theatrical purposes.

• *Use of Stereopticon Slides*

It was an attempt to teach the geography and history of the New Testament in the church school that brought the writer face to face with the possibilities of visual instruction. Out of approximately 2,500 stereopticon slides available, a bare three or four hundred were selected to represent the highlights of this subject. Ten maps of Palestine were selected to set forth the physical, social and political features of Old Testament and New Testament times. There were five to fifteen slides on each of the important cities of ancient Israel, and incidental slides of scenic and traditional interest. Artists' conceptions of the parables, often crudely and less often excellently done, were used in great numbers, providing a rare opportunity to refer to the religious inspiration of medieval art, and the varying conceptions of biblical episodes and teachings down to our own times. Much can be made, for example, of the many and varied conceptions of the face of Christ, beginning with Hoffman's classic painting, and including those of many artists of many lands—all strangely diffefent and yet all strangely alike.

A collection of slides on the life and times of St. Paul is equally rewarding. It calls for maps of the Roman world, the journeys of the missionary, the modes of transportation, the cities of Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece and Italy. It includes pictures of prisons, the catacombs, various types of homes, government buildings, the Athaeneum, the Forum, the market places, the pagan temples, types of people, costumes, coins, et cetera.

• *Pictures As Part of Worship Service*

These pictures, then, whether purchased for a permanent library, or rented as the occasion demands, are to be grouped under specific topics, and shown—six or more—from Sunday to Sunday, as a part of the worship service for the entire school. It is both educational and devotional. In its former function it can be stretched to cover the entire church school period when the function of teaching devolves upon fewer teachers than there are classes; and it lends itself admirably to purposes of discussion sandwiched in between the comments of the leader. Its devotional possibilities, moreover, have only been partially realized. Consider, for example, an illustrated sermonette on the subject, "The People Jesus Talked To." There is "Christ Among the Doctors," "Christ Blessing Little Children," "Christ and the Rich Young Ruler," "Nicodemus' Visit," "The Samaritan Woman," "Christ and Zacchaeus" and others, depicting focal moments of Jesus' unforgettable conversations with the people of his day. It is easy to show too many pictures. It is safer to confine such a sermonette to a narrow subject range such as Jesus and his friends, Jesus and the strangers with whom he talked, Jesus and those who sought his help. Such subjects, well prepared, and supplemented with appropriate lesson material and music, as part of an occasional morning preaching service, will make adults tell their minister that they like his sermonettes a little better than his sermons.

• *Promoting World Friendship Through Pictures*

There is also the subject of world friendship. Simply to mention it in connection with a discussion such as this is to open a field of limitless possibilities. Commercial houses can provide a fair collection of pictures of people of other nations; but unless they are selected with great discrimination they will be obsolete when placed in their present world setting. The opaque projector is more useful here. The children can find in the daily paper, in their school literature, in the omnipresent *National Geographic,* or in less familiar sources suggested by their leader, hundreds of authentic pictures, graphs, charts and illustrations, and enjoy the thrill of seeing their own findings "flashed on the screen."

More than that: they can be assigned the task of finding and arranging a set of pictures and other illustrations around a specific subject, and give the lecture complete, including the setting up and operation of the machine. Here is the visual enlargement of their own participation, the essence of the educational process. The same can be said, of course, with reference to the field of nature study. There are few objects in this field which cannot be studied with greater profit through the medium of the projectoscope. And this instrument, while not desirable for a formal church service, lends itself admirably to purposes of education preparatory to the worship period, or immediately following it. The great range of materials, impossible with the stereopticon, compensates for the less vivid and beautiful projection of the latter. But whether it be the less formal method of instruction, or the more formal service of worship, both instruments can be used for responsive and unison readings and for hymns not to be found in the usual books, and carried through with greater zest and unity because of the one focal point upon which all eyes are riveted.

• *Mechanical Aids—And Worship*

If this article seems to overstress the formal, worship side of the church school it seeks, partially, to be an answer to the objection that mechanical aids destroy rather than induce a spirit of worship. One need only consider the legitimate theater to see a dramatic refutation of this claim. Why all this meticulous regard for correct lighting and sound effects, and for proper staging, if not to provide the necessary mechanical vehicle for the moods, passions and conflicts inherent in the drama? One might also refer to a motion picture such as Emile Zola, for example, which despite previous pre-vues, news reviews and comedies preceding and following it, nevertheless induces a mood which is deeply worshipful.

I am also tempted to suggest a visit to the planetarium. Here, despite a monstrous and awe-inspiring mechanical device which never gets completely out of sight, and a lecture which under any other dome might be utterly uninspiring, one can sit for an hour under make-believe heaven and be literally lifted up with the same mood which caused the Psalmist to exclaim: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his his handiwork." An experience of this kind is well worth seeking in the church. Conceptions of one's mystical relationship to endless cosmic outreaches everywhere, and poetic expressions such as those found in Psalms 19 and 139, may be suggested with such pictures as: a magnificent landscape, migratory birds in flight with references to their great range and power of endurance, telescopic views of stars and universes and constellations or microscopic views of snowflakes. This is a frank and deliberate appeal to mysticism; but if it is undertaken with proper caution, utter honesty, careful attention to the smallest detail and the poetic touch it will be a healthy mysticism, and a welcome relief from the unplanned, uninspiring preliminary exercises which often pass for "a devotional half hour."

• *Making Social Issues Concrete*

It now remains to be said that the great field of our social tensions and conflicts cannot be adequately presented without visual aids. How can we teach current events, for example, without constant reference to maps, charts, graphs, cartoons, pictures and news clippings? An hour's recital of statistics and other data will accomplish less than the simple projection of maps, et cetera, on the screen with a few incisive comments.

There is also the vast and, to a large extent, unutilized power of the cartoon to impress people's minds and stir their emotions. The left-wing press, for the most part unread by the members of our churches, provides a veritable flood of pictured comment on the personalities and issues of the times. Fleeting before our eyes as we leaf through the daily grist these drawings scarcely make an impression, even on ourselves. Magnified on the screen with deliberate comment they leave impressions that are ineffaceable. They then have the effect of posters screaming at groups of people whose attention is riveted on what they have to say. The pity of the modern cartoon is its inability to tell its story, to leap out of its page and into the mind of the people. The projectoscope is the instrument to give it its needed dimensions, and to amplify its appeal. As a beginning I recommend a not so recent book, *The Best of Art Young,* and another, *A Portrait of America,* containing a hundred drawings by members of the American Artists' Congress. The daily press must, of course, be constantly drawn upon.

• *What About the Motion Picture?*

I have said little about the motion picture because that is another problem. The sound movie is too expensive for most churches although pioneer work in making it available for the churches has been done by the Harmon Foundation. But it is not the function of the church to compete with professional motion picture entertainment. It is our function, rather, to develop our own resources for educational and worship purposes, and to use these as a background against which to develop public opinion and action with reference to blockbooking and other evils of the commercialized theater.

Let it be said in conclusion that, whereas it is late, it is not too late for ministers to realize that the visual aids to education and worship are at hand. The decision as to the extent of their use to this end rests entirely with them.

• WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE •

REV. ALFRED GRANT WALTON *received* his education at Oberlin College and Oberlin Theological Seminary, and at Columbia University. Following pastorates at Stamford, Conn., and Springfield, Mass., he went to Tompkins Avenue Congregational Church in Brooklyn, where he now ministers.

Born in the Netherlands, the son of a minister, Rev. JOHN M. VERSTEEG came to America at the age of twelve, when his father was called to the pastorate of the Dutch Reformed Church in Paterson, N. J. Family reverses sent him into a mill at 14; he was its manager at 21. Turning from business, he pursued studies at Drew. Early pastorates were at Jersey City, N. J., Port Jervis, N. Y. and Newark, N. J. Then for several years he led the activities of South Avenue Church, Wilkinsburg, Pa., and during the past six years has ministered at Walnut Hills-Avondale Methodist Episcopal Church in Cincinnati.

Bishop JOHN S. STAMM *entered the* ministry of the Evangelical Church in 1899. Following a number of pastorates—the last at Oak Park, Ill.,—he became, in 1919, professor of systematic theology at the Evangelical Seminary. In 1926 he was elected bishop of the Evangelical Church.

Rev. C. MARSHALL MUIR *has for several years been minister of one of the important churches of Pittsburgh—Bellefield Presbyterian Church.*

The churches ministered to by G. RAY JORDAN have been in the forefront in their contributions to missions. For several years at Wesley Memorial Methodist, High Point, N. C., he now ministers to Centenary Church in Winston-Salem, N. C.

Following the war Rev. WILLIAM B. MATHEWS was industrial and religious secretary for the Y. M. C. A. in Pittsburgh and Chicago. He followed Disciples pastorates in Bloomington, Ind., and Des Moines, Ia., with his present service at the Stone Church in New Bedford, Mass.

Dr. HARRIS FRANKLIN RALL *is Professor of Christian Doctrine at Garrett Biblical Institute.*

Rev. EDWIN T. BUEHRER *is minister of* the Fellowship Church, Orono, Me.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

LYNN TOWNSEND WHITE, Professor of Christian Social Ethics, San Francisco Theological Seminary. "Is Belief Power or Luggage?" Mark 9:22, 23— "If thou canst do anything . . . help us. And Jesus said unto him, If thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth."

THOMAS S. KEPLER, Professor of Religion, Lawrence College. "In Quest of Life's Meaning." Matt. 10:39—"He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

D. W. CHARLTON, First Baptist, East New Market, Md. "The Survival of the Fittest." Psalm 94:15b—"The future is with men of upright mind." (Moffatt)

WESLEY SHRADER, Felix Memorial Baptist, Lexington, Ky. "A Gambler's Luck." Gen. 13:11—"Then Lot chose him all the plain of the Jordan."

MILTON B. HOLCOMB, First Methodist, Belle Plaine, Kan. "Spiritual Security." John 10:30—"I and my Father are one."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

. . . . . .
Title of Sermon

. . . . . .
Text used (write out the text)

. . . . . .
Name of minister

. . . . . .
Name of church

. . . . . .
Address

ADAM A. TANGARONE, Italian Congregational, Torrington, Conn. "Our Declaration of Independence." Rom. 1:14a—"I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians."

JOHN D. CLINTON, Methodist, Fayette, Ia. "The God Who Will Do So Again." II Cor. 1:10—"And he will do so again." (Weymouth)

HARVEY T. WHALEY, First Baptist, Pine Bluff, Ark. "The Religion of Obedience and Service." Isa. 6:8—"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, 'Here am I; send me.' "

DWIGHT C. SMITH, Congregational, Bellingham, Wash. "The Priceless Gift." Acts 3:6—"Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

VERNON VAN BUREN, Methodist, Yellow Springs, O. "Architects of Destiny." I Cor. 3:9—"We are laborers together with God."

CLARENCE E. LANGLEY, First Presbyterian, Red Wing, Minn. "Mastering Our Moods." Psa. 55:5, 18—"Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me." "He hath delivered my soul in peace."

DANIEL H. MILLER, First Baptist, Keene, N. H. "This Is the Life!" John 17:3—"And in this consists the Life of the Ages—in knowing Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." (Weymouth)

MARLIN B. CURRY, North Fork, W. Va. "Christians With Power." II Kings 19:30—"And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward."

THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

THE moral chaos in which the world finds itself has been revealed with startling vividness by the happenings in Europe during the past month. As I write, the war clouds are darker than at any time since Hitler's designs on Czechoslovakia first became apparent. I have kept a pretty steady belief that there would be no general war, but that Hitler would get what he wants without fighting. Today this belief is wavering, if not toppling over. What is it that restrains France and Great Britain from accepting Hitler's challenge to make good their sacred pledges to Czechoslovakia? Is it simply their fear of Germany's military power, reinforced by Italy? That such fear exists cannot be denied. But war is always a hazard, and nations have always been ready under far less provocation to accept its uncertainties. We cannot imagine John Bull, two decades ago, cringing before Hitler's truculence. Why, then, the cringing policy of Chamberlain? I think there are two answers, neither of them military. One is the baffling problem of what to do with a victory, if it should be won. Suppose Germany were again defeated—what kind of settlement is conceivable? Another Versailles treaty? But the first Versailles has not only proved futile but provocative. A lenient and conciliatory settlement? It is hard to imagine that the allies can conceive of such an adjustment to say nothing of having the will to execute it. A second reason is that allied victory would certainly spell communism in Central Europe, which could easily spread to the victorious democracies, and defeat would surely spell communism in the democracies themselves. This is the tragic predicament in which Western civilization finds itself: it nowhere provides a footing upon which moral action can stand. Right and wrong have lost their meaning in a world whose foundations rest in chaos.

A World In Chaos

The Book of the Month

THOSE GAY MIDDLE AGES. *By Frederick D. Kershner. Willett, Clark & Company, $2.00.*

THIS book is fascinating, disillusionizing and highly informative. The irony in the title reappears again and again in the treatment. The author holds that we moderns have been misled as to the actual conditions of the Middle Ages, and that we carry in our heads a picture of European life during the thousand years from the fifth to the fifteenth century that is as false as it is romantic. He traces much of this popular illusion to the novels of Sir Walter Scott who painted a highly romantic and unreal picture of life in the age of chivalry. Even though his characters were selected primarily from the nobility, Scott tells his tales in complete disregard of actual living conditions. Dr. Kershner's opening chapter, entitled "Pigs is Pigs," exhibits the squalor and filth of the cities and villages. Disease was rampant beyond our power to imagine. Superstition, magic, cruelty, abysmal ignorance and "general diabolism" abounded. The cruelty of the Middle Ages is traced by the author to a widespread pathological sex life resulting in sadism, masochism and such like abnormalities. Dr. Kershner does full justice to the art which flowered at the end of the period, but will not allow that the art was dependent upon the sordid environment which surrounded it or that the appropriation of its values justifies us in wishing to reproduce the civilization to which it belonged.

A Thought for the Month

I AM ready to subscribe to the thesis that the lore of the Christian faith is an inseparable part of Christianity. For many years the trend in Protestantism has been away from this thesis. Our scholars and preachers have long been engaged in extracting the moral content from the historic Christian ideology and setting up this content as the essence of the Christian faith. We have thus reduced our religion to a kind of moralism. The Sermon on the Mount, some have said, is the essence of Christianity. Others go farther and affirm that the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man is all there is to Christianity. Others go farther still, and affirm that the Golden Rule is the essence. None of these affirmations is sufficient. Christianity comes to us not primarily as a moral code, nor even as an ethical motivation. It does not present itself to us in the imperative mood, as a counsel of duty. It comes in the indicative mood, as a revelation of what *is*. It is not a command, but a gospel. It is good news. A counsel of duty is not good news. Paul showed us that. It was bad news for him. The law of righteousness made him "wretched"; he cried out for deliverance from it; and he thanked God for the deliverance which he found in Jesus Christ. Our Protestantism has been lured away from its own unique gospel to the standards and ideology of secular culture. But Christianity cannot live if it surrenders its own ideology to the ideology of science or secular morality. The whole body of historic Christian lore is precious. It must be conserved and handed on from generation to generation. Whatever changes it undergoes—and it will change, as it always has changed—must take place not by adaptation to something outside itself, but by the inward development of its own inherent and organic life. The weakness of Western Protestantism lies in its failure to impart its lore—its Bible, its history, its liturgy, its hymnody, its theology, its structural ideas—to its children. The result is that we now have a generation which when we preach the gospel hardly knows what we are talking about.

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Charles Clayton Morrison

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